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Inside this Issue:

Naval Hospital Jacksonville Deployes Staff Members to Kuwait	2
ESG 5 Medical Passes Mass Casualty Drill Evaluation	2
Camp Pendleton EMT Course top in the Navy	3
Pensacola Joins President's "100K Lives" Campaign	4
EMF Portsmouth Returns From Kuwait	4
Jacksonville Hospital Staff Puts 'Healthy Foot Forward'	5

Items of Interest:

- President Directs Federal Agencies to Provide Health Care Quality and Price Information for Consumers.** With an Executive Order aimed at federal agencies that provide coverage to nearly one in every four Americans with health insurance, President Bush today took a major step forward in providing consumers with easy-to-use information about the quality and price of their health care. The information will enable consumers to make informed choices among doctors and hospitals, and it will help support doctors and hospitals that deliver high-quality care and avoid unnecessary health care costs, creating opportunities to improve care and lower its costs. For more information, visit www.hhs.gov

Navy and Marine Corps Medical News

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National Naval Medical Center to Begin Fleet Marine Force Course

By Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Heather Weaver, National Naval Medical Center Public Affairs

BETHESDA, Md. - Chiefs at National Naval Medical Center are creating a Fleet Marine Force course to help educate hospital corpsmen before they deploy.

The course is still being structured and will not qualify Sailors for their warfare device, according to Chief Hospital Corpsman (SW/FMF) Aaron Vandall, but it will better prepare them overall for the fleet.

"The course is still in the building phase. But basically, we are going to take the Fleet Marine Force [personal qualification standards] and break them into classes, as

well as have practical training evolutions with Quantico," Vandall said. "Sailors will [do weapons qualifications], land navigation, communications and casualty evacuation radio messages."

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class (FMF) Jeremy Moore, the hospital's Career Development assistant leading petty officer and a former Fleet Marine Force deployed Sailor, said a course like this will help Sailors who have not had prior field experience understand the world they are about to enter.

"The Navy, especially Navy Medicine, is constantly growing and changing," Moore said. "For a Sailor

(Continued on page 3)



KUPANG, Indonesia – Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Ronald Bayaca performs a CAT scan on a patient aboard the Military Sealift Command (MSC) hospital ship USNS Mercy (T-AH 19) during the ship's visit to Kupang, Aug. 22. *U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Joseph Caballero*

Naval Hospital Jacksonville Deploys Staff Members to Kuwait

By Loren Barnes, Naval Hospital Jacksonville Public Affairs

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - Naval Hospital Jacksonville saw six staff members off to Expeditionary Medical Facility (EMF) Kuwait on Thursday, Aug 17. This was followed by the return of 16 medical personnel from a six-month deployment to EMF Kuwait the following Saturday.

As she said farewell to the six Sailors shipping out, Hospital Commanding Officer Capt. Raquel Bono expressed her confidence and pride in how the NH Jacksonville personnel would represent Navy Medicine while at the U.S. Army facility.

Bono's confidence is based on the solid professionalism of medical personnel like Surgeon Lt. William Lechuga. He was upbeat about the deployment. "We're going to have an opportunity to do some good out there," he said. "I hope to be able to help out and do what I can to get people fixed up so they can do what they need to do." Lechuga said he expects to mainly provide routine surgical services, such as appendectomies, gall bladder operations, etc. at the EMF. But he added they will likely see some trauma, coming from

the war zone.

Lechuga was seen off by his wife Elaina, his son Matel, and father-in-law Mario Hernandez.

The team was rotating with another team of Naval Hospital Jacksonville medical personnel, 16 of whom returned home late Saturday evening arriving at Jacksonville International Airport. They were greeted by several excited staff members, family members and friends.

As she came out of the concourse HM3 Yazmin Avila-Lima was embraced by her husband Army Specialist Rodriguez Rivera. Asked how it felt to finally be home Avila-Lima said, "It feels great! It was a long flight." Describing her duties in Kuwait she said, "I was a lab tech, supplying basic laboratory needs and blood supply." This was her first deployment and Avila-Lima said she'll always remember "a lot of long days, long hours and very hot weather."

Capt. Mary Jackson of the hospital's Family Practice Department agreed the Navy Medicine personnel had much to be proud of. "We did our job and everyone did it well, she said." With her husband Troy and sons J.P. and Michael at her side again, she added, "I'm just happy to be back home."

ESG 5 Medical Passes Mass Casualty Drill Evaluation

By Mass Communication Specialist
1st Class Michael Miller, USS Boxer
Public Affairs

USS BOXER, At Sea - Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 5's medical team completed a mass casualty drill Aug. 17 off the coast of Southern California while preparing for its upcoming deployment scheduled for later this year.

The drill was used to evaluate the medical team and certify them as ready to deploy. It was part of ESG 5's Joint Task Force Exercise, the final step in certifying the strike group for deployment.

The medical team was stress tested by adding more casualties to the scenario than what they experienced during drills held earlier this summer. The drill began with a humanitarian assistance operation convoy moving through an area outside Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, Calif., when a simulated terrorist attack injured more than 20 Marines. The injured were immediately evacuated to USS Boxer (LHD 4) by helicopter.

"It proved no matter how much

is thrown at us, we can handle it," said Fleet Surgical Team (FST) 5 Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Matthew Duncan. "The key is to stay in control. You have to play off each other's strengths and weaknesses, which we did."

The drill was evaluated by Amphibious Group 3 surgeons, representing U.S. 3rd Fleet as the certifying authority for ESG 5's medical team. The ESG's medical team was graded on the levels of care given to the casualties, and how quickly and effectively the patients were moved from one level of care to the next.

"They did outstanding," said Cmdr. Michael Nace, deputy group surgeon for Amphibious Group 3. "Watching them operate, you can't tell that there are different commands involved. They truly work well together as a team."

The large number of casualties required the team to effectively move patients to different levels of care much faster than in the past.

"Each level is reliant on the corpsmen knowing their job and doing it well," said FST 5 surgeon,

Lt. Cmdr. (Dr.) Gordon Wisbach. "I was really surprised by the high level of efficiency that these Sailors perform at. You can tell they have done this before."

Though the team has only been working together the past month, they have already responded to three mass casualty drills.

"This is low-drag, high-speed medicine," said Boxer Senior Chief Hospital Corpsman Stephen Richardson, Boxer's medical department leading chief petty officer. "Fortunately, we don't deal with mass casualties often, but this shows that with teamwork, integration and training, we can step into that role smoothly."

The ESG 5 medical team passed the evaluation and is now certified ready to deploy.

"The evaluation is over, but we're staying sharp and ready," added Duncan. "Our mission during the real thing is to save as many as possible, so we have to stay ready."

FST 5 and Boxer are part of ESG 5 which is scheduled to deploy this fall.

Camp Pendleton EMT Course top in the Navy

By Lance Cpl. Stephen McGinnis,
Consolidated Public Affairs Office,
Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton

MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP

PENDLETON - During a recent National Registry Emergency Medical Technicians Organization conference, Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton's (EMT) Basic Program was recognized as the number one EMT-Basic Program in the Navy.

"Being acknowledged as one of the top programs in the nation really recognizes the students. It shows the dedication they have and their accomplishments," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Martin R. Villanueva, course coordinator and lead instructor.

The program was ranked as one of the top 12 programs from among 8,000 EMT Programs nationwide.

This honor was based upon Naval Hospital Camp Pendleton's sustained superior performance, as they have achieved a 95% average passing rate on the National Registry examination consistently over the last three years.

The course is designed to train emergency personnel and staff at the naval hospital, fire crash rescue, and any other service members whose job requires EMT certification.

The service members enrolled in the course go through a condensed 18 training day version of the National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians course. The NREMT course lasts an entire semester. Students are graded on five different exams and must maintain a 70 percent average.



MARINE CORPS BASE CAMP PENDLETON - Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Travis Thibault (left) and Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Kano Williams, both from the 52 Area Branch Medical Clinic, practice lifting techniques of a spinal cord injury patient on a rugged structure during an EMT Basic Course practical skills class Aug. 18. *U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Griselle Naranjo*

(Continued on page 5)

FMF Course continued...

(Continued from page 1)

to keep up with information, ... they have to be annually trained. This course will help the Sailors understand a little better the situation they will be in when they get into a Fleet Marine Force situation. [It will also] help them not be so shocked when they are put into that situation."

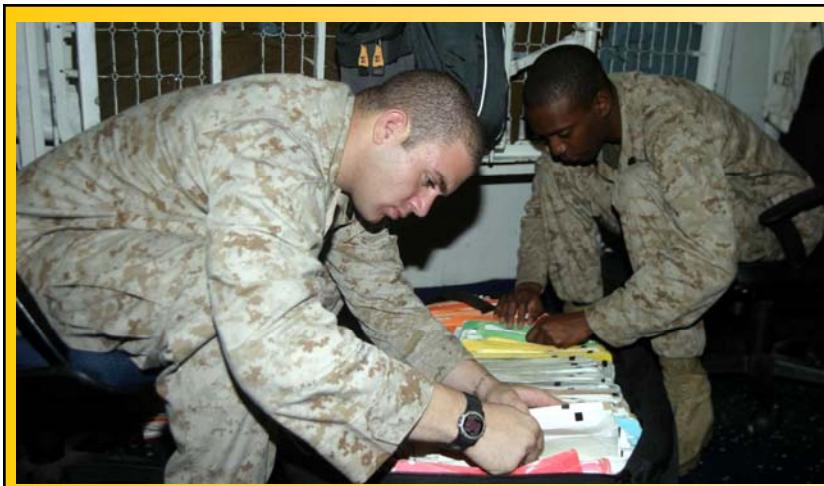
Vandall said classes will target recently graduated 'A' school junior enlisted corpsmen and field medical school students. He said deploying Sailors need to have a basic understanding and knowledge that is not currently being provided to them.

"We owe it to them to take our operational experience and impart that on Sailors who have not deployed," Vandall said.

Generally, Sailors coming from a shore command are unaware of the Marine Corps way of life, Moore said. He said this course will help Sailors become more familiar with Marines and give them better care.

"Someone coming from a hospital command that has never been deployed is accustomed to the Navy way of life as opposed to the Marine Corps way of life," Moore added. "It's quite a bit different. Things are more vigorous, including training, the physical aspect and it's harder for Sailors who aren't used to it."

Vandall said the course should start this fall and experienced, formally deployed Sailors will teach the classes.



RED SEA - Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Bryan Eshkenazi and Hospital Corpsman Seaman Frank Peterson assigned to the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit BLT 1/8 Charlie Company currently embarked aboard the amphibious transport dock ship USS Nashville (LPD 13), inventory medical record bags as part of medical readiness program Aug 22. *U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Shonn Moore*

Pensacola Joins President's "100K Lives" Campaign

By Rod Duren, Naval Hospital Pensacola Public Affairs

PENSACOLA, Fla. - On the heels of President Bush's Aug. 22 Executive Order for federal healthcare programs to promote quality and efficient care, Naval Hospital (NH) Pensacola announced Aug. 24, it is joining with the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's (IHI) "100,000 Lives Campaign," one of the largest quality improvement healthcare initiatives ever undertaken in American history.

The IHI initiative is the first national campaign to promote saving a specified number of lives in hospitals by certain dates through the implementation of proven, evidence-based practices and procedures. As of June 14, hospitals within the Campaign have saved an estimated 122,300 lives since its beginnings in 2005.

Speaking of the President's decision to promote quality and efficient healthcare, Capt. Kevin Berry, commanding officer of NH Pensacola, said he was "thrilled the President recognized the Department of Defense healthcare system" as part of the announcement.

"All of us in military medicine, and at Naval Hospital Pensacola and our 12 Naval Branch Health Clinics (across Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi and West Tennessee), take the promotion of efficient, high quality safe patient care

as our first priority," said Berry.

"Delivering high quality, safe patient care, with patients and their families foremost in our mind, is our priority anytime and anywhere... aboard ships and subs, with aircraft squadrons, in foxholes, and field hospitals, as well as in the most modern of our (military) hospitals and clinics," he said.

According to IHI President and CEO Dr. Donald Berwick, the "100,000 Lives Campaign" has organized an "unprecedented campaign to elect quality. The healthcare organizations that join this campaign are dedicated to putting proven, life-saving improvement techniques into action."

NH Pensacola is working on four quality improvement changes: prevention of adverse drug events, prevention of central line infections, prevention of surgical site infections, and prevention of ventilator-associated complications.

"Our uniformed healthcare and support staff serving the national security and homeland defense missions are experts in many aspects of dental and medical care; and assist American communities in times of calamity; and even other nations in their time of need," Berry said.

EMF Portsmouth Returns From Kuwait

By Mass Communication Specialist
1st Class Jim Bane, Fleet Public
Affairs Center Atlantic

PORTSMOUTH, Va. - Nineteen members of the Expeditionary Medical Force (EMF) Portsmouth, Bravo Detachment, Wave 1, returned home Aug. 19, after a six-month deployment in support of EMF Kuwait.

EMF Portsmouth consists of doctors, nurses, corpsmen, supply, administration and communication staff. The group augmented with an EMF unit from Camp Pendleton, Calif., as part of a joint force with the Army to provide medical care in the Kuwaiti theatre.

"We provided medical care for deploying and re-deploying forces and anyone who was going to Iraq," said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Sean Dover.

Peggy Simmer, the command ombudsman for Naval Medical Center Portsmouth (NMCP) and a group of volunteers, organized the welcome home celebration in the gymnasium.

"This is one of many homecomings we have done this year," said Simmer. "We usually start planning a month in advance, but sometimes we have much less notice."

The scheduled arrival of the EMF Portsmouth group was delayed, but the excitement level never let up. As each hour passed, family members began arriving, carrying signs, balloons and gifts for their loved ones and friends who would soon be home.

Music by the Atlantic Fleet Band helped pass the time as the bus carrying the EMF group made its way from Baltimore-Washington International Airport to Portsmouth, where Rear Adm. Thomas Cullison, commander of Naval Medical Center Portsmouth, greeted each service member as they departed the bus. Members of the NMCP command duty staff and chief petty officer selects joined spouses and family members of the returning Sailors to greet them.

"We want to be here to let these guys know that they have our full support, we are proud to be part of

their homecoming and that we are glad everyone made it home safe," said Chief (sel) Hospital Corpsman Chris Wagner.

Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Matthew McCoy knows well the feelings of the returning service members.

"Everyone wants to get back to be reunited with people that they have only spoken to on the phone for the last six months," said McCoy. "It is really a special moment when you see the warm smiling faces of the people you know and love. This is the least we as leaders can do for everyone returning."

Jennifer Felan and her two daughters, Megan and Madison, were among those waiting for their father, Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Henry Felan, to return.

"Having a celebration like this is really important, especially for the kids," said Jennifer. "When they see so many people have come out to welcome their dad home, they get the feel of how important his job is."

Jacksonville Hospital Staff Puts 'Healthy Foot Forward'

By Loren Barnes, Naval Hospital Public Affairs

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. - Naval Hospital Jacksonville staff must "put their healthy foot forward" is why Capt. Raquel Bono said physical readiness is a must for her staff. For some time now Bono has set the example for staff members who are working out in the hospital's Physical Training (PT) program. She not only encourages her staff, both active duty and civilians, to participate but also shows up herself to set the pace.

Bono said it is important that the hospital staff "put their money where their mouth is" in setting a good physical fitness example for beneficiaries. It is crucial to both our missions she said. Being fit is not only important to the hospital staff deployment readiness but also to reminding hospital beneficiaries; active duty, family members and retirees alike; that keeping physically fit can extend the longevity and quality of life.

Bono will be competing in the

Aug. 24-27 Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Sports Challenge aboard NAS Jacksonville and Bono said she has confidence that the ongoing PT training will give her staff an edge in the events. She said, "We've got to get ourselves ready for the Sports Challenge. I expect that we'll have a very strong showing."

The hospital's PT program, which falls under the Wellness Center's direction, starts at 6 a.m. Friday mornings in the hospital's out-patient parking lot. While turnout generally had averaged 40 people, with Bono's encouragement, more than 160 people recently turned out for the Friday morning PT.

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Emanuel Essienete who helps run the program said the program is basically open to anyone. "We don't turn anyone away," he said. "We're just out there to have fun and get in shape."

Essienete said the program is designed to help active duty members meet the Physical Readiness Test (PRT) requirements. The regi-

men begins with stretching and aerobic exercises which require less breathing control, activities such as sit-ups, jumping jax, etc. This is followed by anaerobic exercises involving more strength training. These exercises; such as push-ups, crunches, etc.; require more breath control Essienete explained. Then it's off for a 2.2 mile jog, down Mustin Road.

As the hospital seeks to encourage civilians to participate, the program coordinators plan to incorporate a less demanding regimen for people with physical limitations. This program will start out with lighter calisthenics and a fast walking program.

For anyone who needs a little more motivation and guidance on adopting a healthy lifestyle the hospital's Wellness Center also offers their Shipshape Sailors program. This eight-week weight management program covers a wide range of topics dealing with healthy eating habits and tips for exercising more effectively.

EMT Course continued...

(Continued from page 3)

The Naval Hospital tests students everyday and must maintain an average of 80 percent or above. If a student falls below 80 percent, they are given many opportunities to bring there grades up. Tutoring is made available to them; extra homework is given to ensure they understand the material and instructors make themselves available for after school help.

"From start to finish the course is very intense and fast paced, everyday is something new and they are constantly learning. The students go through 25 more hours than what the NMEMT requires," said Villanueva.

"The reason the course is so successful is because we have a very dedicated core group of in-

structors. We have highly motivated individuals that want to succeed. The students understand the importance of having this knowledge," said Cmdr. Constance L. Worline, EMT program director.

Along with the in-house training, students must stand two, four-hour emergency room duties and one, eight-hour ambulance duty. They are evaluated on their performance during these duties.

Upon completion of the course, the students must take the NREMT exam in order to become certified EMTs. That is where the Naval Hospital has been so successful, because they train the service members and constantly reiterate information.

"We do the best we can for students no matter what the situation is," said Villanueva.



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